

Larissa Harper Hairgrove

1075 E. Holly Grove Rd., Lexington, NC 27292
Phone: 336-686-0870 • Email: send2rissa@gmail.com

Objective

To market my hometown's "sense of place", amenities, landmarks, and attractions to visitors and residents in order to further improve our overall economic vitality (*working collaboratively with tourism board members, city/county departments, business and property owners, Uptown Lexington, Inc., Chamber of Commerce and other organizations*).

Qualifications

I am uniquely qualified for this role as my work over the past 20 years with Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce, Greensboro Convention and Visitors Bureau, Economic Development Commissions, Council of Governments and municipalities for 3 communities, multiple organizations (*quasi-governmental and strictly non-profit*) within the national Main Street America program, plus a multitude of partner organizations, has honed my relationship-building skills in order to successfully interact with a wide range of individuals, developing connections for synergetic alliances. In addition, I believe my last 10 years of experience developing and marketing center-city business districts into diverse, lively areas for visitors and residents will be beneficial. A background in real estate and pride for my community fuels my desire to "show off" all the wonderful features of Davidson County and support its growth.

Professional Experience

Downtown Development Director, City of Salisbury NC and Downtown Salisbury, Inc. 2017 – 2020

- Salary: \$80,000 from City Downtown Development Dept. Budget of \$347,000 (\$76,000 for Cheerwine Festival)
- Downtown MSD Tax Funding for Programming: \$135,000
- City of Salisbury Population Approx. 34,000
- Built new department and merged economic development duties through new quasi-governmental structure
- Managed 2 Full-Time Staff members (Events & Marketing Coordinator and Admin.) plus 21 Member Board
- Overall duties the same as listed for my roles in the communities of Kernersville and Wilson:
To enhance the downtown municipal service district through business retention, recruitment, property development, marketing and memorable events; Responsible for NCMS Reporting/Assessments, Awards
- City Management Team Member Duties/Accomplishments:
 - Department Head/Management Team Member responsible for overseeing planning and development in MSD, staying within budget, cutting for efficiency and conservation of funds when needed.
 - Worked extensively with Planning & Community Development Dept, with consultants on a downtown parking study, market study, updating the Downtown Master Plan and other internal & external programs and projects
 - Empire Hotel Mixed-Use Project gained momentum and relations improved with developer
 - Attended City Council every 1st and 3rd Tuesday
- Non-Profit Organization Operation Duties/Accomplishments:
 - Led board meetings, multiple committee meetings, oversight of budget, operational documents, policies
 - Updated by-laws/operational documents, assets/inventory, created and implemented surveys
 - Established productive Quarterly Downtown Stakeholders Meetings that increased in participation
 - Assisted with Designing new logos and branding campaign consistent with Rowan County
- During my tenure, both organizations gained better rapport with business & property owners, including long-time vacant/underutilized/maintenance-deferred properties receiving repair, improvements, and tenants
- Hosted 2019 NC Main Street Conference (record attendance of 750)
- Grant Writing & Awards:
 - \$543,000 Federal Paul Bruhn Historic Redevelopment Grant Awarded—August 2020
 - \$10-20,000 EPA/USDA Local Foods, Local Grant for technical assistance—Awarded April 2020
 - \$1 Million RISE Grant for Empire Hotel in Governor's Budget—Cut out of final FY20 State budget

Downtown Business Specialist, City of Wilson NC Planning & Community Revitalization Dept. 2012 – 2017

- Salary: \$65,000 from City Downtown Development Div. of Community Planning Dept. Budget of \$350-400,000
- Downtown MSD Tax Funding for Programming: \$75,000

L. Harper Resume--Page 1 of 4

EXHIBIT

10

- City of Wilson Population Approx.: 49,000
- In-kind city staff for two (2) non-profit agencies providing assistance with property development of vacant/underutilized buildings, both public and privately owned, recruiting developers/investors & tenants
- Administered Grants on the Federal, State, and local level:
 - \$1.2 Million of Federal Economic Initiative Special Projects grants (3)—Successfully closed out
 - \$96,700 in Municipal Service District grants—Administered and authored revision
 - \$50,000 NC Department of Commerce Building Reuse Grant for 1st brewery
 - Assisted in creating terms and process for City & County Tax Grant for improvements >\$400K
- Worked with city legal counsel to create and execute complex Public/Private Development Agreements
- Assisted in various ways with small and large property development projects over 5 years:
 - \$12 Million development of historic tobacco warehouse (Whirligig Station)
 - \$4 Million development of 209-217 South St. (217 Brew Works& adjacent buildings)
 - \$1.5 Million development of 315 Nash Street, E. (Nash Street Lofts)
 - \$800,000 development of 120 Goldsboro Street, S. in 2013-14 (Wilson Furniture Company Lofts)
 - \$400,000 of individual property sales (8 properties) between years 2014 to 2016
- Managed Strategic Action Plan for Economic Development Committee for Wilson Downtown Development Corp. (WDDC), a 509a1, charged with administering MSD funding of approx. \$75,000
- In conjunction with attorney and board members negotiated contracts, performed admin & financial reporting duties for Wilson Downtown Properties, Inc., (WDP) a 501c3 property holding company for econ dev projects
- Assisted in updating city ordinances and codes pertaining specifically to sidewalk dining, alcohol consumption, food truck management, and new issues facing growing downtowns
- Coordinated meetings regarding streetscape between downtown business/property owners & city staff
- Worked with various consultants, including UNC School of Government's Development Finance Initiative staff to analyze the downtown district, areas for growth, tools for investors, & Historic Cherry Hotel RFP
- Offer business assistance tools/resources for existing & new businesses located within MSD
- Assisted in various ways to bring Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park to fruition--catalyst development project
- Co-managed regular merchant meetings, worked Downtown events and assisted with Dept. of Commerce--NC Main Street Reporting/Assessments and Awards

Executive Director, Kernersville Downtown Preservation & Development Council, Inc. 2010 – 2012

- Salary: \$37,000; Non-Profit Budget: \$86,000 (No MSD – Downtown District has small footprint)
- Town of Kernersville Population Approx.: 24,600
- As the sole staff member of this 501c3, successfully expanded the econ dev role and improved operations
- Developed and implemented a strategic plan in conjunction with a 16 member volunteer Board of Directors
- Created and sustained relationships that led to increased merchant support, sponsorships, and donations
- Facilitated monthly collaborative meeting of merchants and interested members of public, board members
- Liaison between town officials and downtown business and property owners to relay concerns, resolve issues
- Connected commercial tenants to property owners/agents in downtown district, including a mixed-use rehab project of former cotton/hosiery/furniture factory called "The Factory" (residential condos/retail/office)
- Gathered data for town planning studies and worked with various town staff on joint projects
- Created first Facebook page, marketing efforts through multiple media outlets, co-op marketing campaigns
- Managed and promoted new town branding campaign (From legal docs, media spots, to light post banners)
- Assisted in developing 5-year plan and fundraising campaigns to renovate the town's historic 1873 Train Depot
- Created income-producing, long-term projects and secured grants to raise funds for the organization's projects
- Purchased promotional products, managed merchandise sales in-house and through website via Pay-Pal
- Assist with largest town event (25,000 ppl), as well as created and managed small events (up to 4,000 ppl)
- Other duties included daily accounting, producing budgets, financial reports, minutes, and agendas for board and committees, and presenting to civic clubs and other community organizations

Independent Contractor, Real Estate Broker 1998 – 2002 & 2005 – 2010

- Marketed and sold residential real estate in Davie, Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Stokes and Yadkin counties
- Partnered to establish two real estate firms in Davie county between 1998 and 2005 that represented residential & commercial clients (Affiliate Companies: Pennington & Co., Premier Realty, Allen Tate)
- Assisted residential developers with new home community design, sales, and promotions
- Connected clients with Triad area construction contractors, city and county resource staff

L. Harper Resume--Page 2 of 4

- Brokerage duties: Pair properties with clients' needs, prepare and negotiate contracts, conduct research, analyze and interpret market data/trends, perform record searches, create and implement marketing campaigns

National Education Sales Manager, Greensboro Area Convention & Visitors Bureau **2004 – 2005**

- Managed 1 staff person (Assistant)
- Traveled locally and nationally to build relationships and promote Greensboro, NC as a prime location for education associations' national, regional, and local conferences
- Generated sales and budget reports to be included in data and statistics summary for City of Greensboro
- Attended monthly & quarterly joint board meetings to report on committed and potential conference bookings
- Generated and distributed RFPs to find the best meeting packages from event venues and hotels
- Directed the customization of gift packages of branded "swag" (of nominal value) for recruiting & marketing to education associations and to booked conference attendees number from 100s to 1,000s
- Assisted in planning group events, coordinating with hotel & meeting space sales representatives, other services

Office Manager/Membership Sales, Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce **2002 – 2003**

- Promoted and implemented the Program of Work for the Lexington, NC, Chamber of Commerce
- Assisted Marketing Director with implementing and managing fundraising, member awards & events
- Responsible for daily operation of Chamber of Commerce office, including first point of contact for public inquiries, as well as some A/R and A/P bookkeeping (working regularly with accountant)
- Coordinated board meetings and acted as secretary for several committees
- Presented benefits of membership to business owners leading to increased membership sales

Owner, Sunrise Diner of Union Grove, Iredell Co., NC **2000 – 2002**

- Owned and operated restaurant that grew from 2 to 3 shifts (approx. 15-20 Full-Time and Part-Time employees)

Teacher, Davidson County Schools, Lexington, NC **1996 – 1998**

- First year, lateral entry teacher, taught 7th grade Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Math at North Davidson Middle School
- Second year, taught 4th grade for the fall semester at Reeds Elementary School, then returned to North Davidson Middle School to teach 6th grade Language Arts and Social Studies during the spring semester

Legal Secretary, Wilson, Biesecker Tripp & Sink, Lexington, NC **1995 – 1996**

- Scheduled appointments, transcribed and prepared documents for Mr. Biesecker while considering law school

Education and Credentials

Catawba College Ketner School of Business Advisory Board Chair 2019-2020

Rowan County Chamber of Commerce Board Member 2017-2020

Wilson Community College Small Business Advisory Board Member 2015-2017

International Economic Development Council Courses (3 toward CECD Certification) 2017

- Intro to Economic Development @ UNC SOG
- Emerging Real Estate Trends for Econ Dev
- Real Estate Development and Reuse

UNC School of Government Courses

- Development Finance Toolbox 2017
- Community Development Academy 2010

NC Real Estate Broker's License (Currently Inactive) 2000

NC Real Estate Salesman's License #187430 1998

NCA&T State University, Greensboro, NC 1997

- 6 Credit Hours toward M. S. in Social Sciences/NC Teaching Certification

Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 1995

- B.S. Degree in Political Science—Pre-Law Emphasis; Dean's List 1994-1995
- Intern for two semesters, Office of U.S. Congressman Pete Hoekstra, Muskegon, MI

Technology Skills

Proficient in MS Office software including Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint, MS TEAMS, Zoom, Constant Contact, Facebook, Instagram, Google Docs, WordPress, Dropbox, QuickBooks & AS400 accounting software, and various industry-specific database software

Work Examples

See the following links below (*printed examples available also*):

➤ **Empire Hotel/Opportunity Zone Recruitment Brochure:**

<https://www.downtownsalisburync.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Empire-Hotel-Executive-Summary-Final-Revised.pdf>

➤ **DSI Website (created & implemented with City Webmaster):** <https://www.downtownsalisburync.com/>

➤ **Videos made in partnership with local marketing firm:**

- NCMS Conference Announcement Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ip79qERzNd0>
- Economic Development Series: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZJn6G-WcCY>
- Promotions Committee Busker's Bash Event Video:
<https://www.facebook.com/downtownsalisbury/videos/10154706036845213/>

References

Andre Nabors, TMP, Partner Relations Manager
Economic Development Partnership of NC (VisitNC)
Ph: 919-447-7771
Email: andre.nabors@visitnc.com

Tyler Mulligan, Public Law Government Professor & Director
Ph: 919-962-0987; Email: mulligan@unc.gov.edu
and **Rory Dowling, Development Advisor**
Ph: 919-616-6216; Email: dowling@sog.unc.edu
UNC School of Government & Development Finance Initiative
Campus Box 3330, Knapp-Sanders Building
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Sherry Adams, Western NC Coordinator
NC Dept. of Commerce Office of Urban Development
48 Grove Street, Asheville, NC 28801
Ph: 336-601-3196
Email: sadams@nccommerce.com

Dan Lambert, Senior Landscape Architect
McAdams Engineering & Planning Consultants
Charlotte/Raleigh/Durham, NC
Ph: 843-467-7533
Email: lambert@mcadamsco.com

Kimberly Van Dyk, Director of Planning and Community Revitalization/Main Street Manager
City of Wilson, Wilson Downtown Development (501c6) and Wilson Downtown Properties (501c3)
112 Goldsboro Street, East; Wilson, NC
Ph: 252-399-2395; Cell: 252-315-9395
Email: kvandyk@wilsonnc.org

Leslie Mozingo, Owner/CEO
Government Relations Specialist
Strategics Consulting, LLC
Washington, DC and NC
Ph: 202-255-5760
Email: leslie@strategicsconsulting.com

Eric Everhart, Owner
The Butcher's Block
30 W. 2nd Ave., Lexington, NC
Ph: 336-300-8353
Email: thebutchersblockllc@gmail.com

Kim and David Nichols, Owners
The Brewer's Kettle
6 E. 1st Ave, Lexington, NC
Ph: 336-688-5346 or 596-4579
Email: 05nichols@gmail.com

Hannah Jacobson, Director
City of Salisbury--Community Planning Dept.
132 N. Main Street; Salisbury, NC
Ph: 704-638-5230
Email: hannah.jacobson@salisburync.gov